

Sermon Notes: Revelation 13:11-18 “The Second Beast”

Satan mimics God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with an unholy trinity of his own:

The **Dragon** represents **Satan**

The **Beast rising out of the sea** is also known as the **Antichrist**

The **Beast rising out of the land** is also known as the **False Prophet**

The term Antichrist only appears 5 times in the New Testament and never in the book of Revelation. The 5 times it is used are only in the epistles of John. Nevertheless, the concept of Antichrist is at the very heart of Revelation 13. The preposition “anti” can mean that which is against, or that which stands in for. Antichrist always seeks to stand over against Christ, but he often attempts to do so by seeking to stand in His stead and occupy the ultimate allegiance of people by whatever means possible.

We tend to think of Antichrist exclusively as a person, one person, who has yet to appear on the scene of history. But it is certainly not the most common idea of Antichrist in the NT. 1 John 4:3 speaks of Antichrist as a spirit that seeks to deny that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. This same verse says that Antichrist is already the world. 1 John 2:18 refers to Antichrists (plural) as people who are false teachers in John’s own time. Here in Revelation 13, the concept of Antichrist is illustrated as a beast, a satanically engineered spirit that expresses itself in specific historical manifestations of governments that oppose the gospel and God’s people.

Many want to make the Antichrist a person, a human being. Well, who always stands at the head of a totalitarian government? A totalitarian ruler. Think about the last 75 years: Adolph Hitler in Germany, Joseph Stalin in Russia, Mao-tse-tung in China, Saddam Hussein in Iraq, Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, the head of Isis. All could be identified as having the spirit of Antichrist. The New Testament may indicate that there is a final and ultimate expression of the beast, a totalitarian government with a final Antichrist to lead it, but this is not the primary emphasis of Revelation 13. This is a composite beast, a trans-historical beast that is more than its specific historical expressions and endures for the entire church age as a rival to the Lamb of God, competing for the allegiance of human beings. And how does the beast do this? By mimicking the victory of the Lamb, by existing as a caricature of the Lamb. And this happens in every generation of Christians- including our own. This does not necessarily mean there will not be a final Antichrist, but Antichrist is present in every generation of the Christian church because although the beast is killed, it comes back to life again – another place, another form, another expression. For these first century Christians to be sure, it was Rome. But Rome died in the 5th century.

The beastly Antichrist governments all desire to intimidate everyone into thinking that they must go along with whatever is decreed by the government and that no one can resist them. But the truth is that even when the devil works his worst, he is still God’s devil. Yes, he is God’s enemy, but he is not God’s rival! He is God’s servant, always and in every way, fulfilling God’s purpose. We saw that very clearly in Revelation 9 where John showed us that God is indeed sovereign over everything, including evil. Satan is no threat to God. He poses no challenge, no competition. He is a creature made by God who exists to serve God. He cannot out think God, he cannot outmaneuver God, he cannot outfight God, he cannot take one step in any direction apart from the will of God. He cannot do one thing to us apart from the sovereign permission of God. Satan is always the servant of God in the sense that for all his malevolence, everything that he ever does- every evil, wicked thing that he ever does – serves to accomplish only the good and holy purposes of God Himself. This

was never more true than at that moment of the devil's greatest wickedness, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Soli Deo Gloria!